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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/844,504	04/27/2001	Mark Wayne Domanico	001441	9052

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FACTOR & PARTNERS, LLC
1327 W. WASHINGTON BLVD.
SUITE 5G/H
CHICAGO, IL 60607

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, THUKHANH T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1722

DATE MAILED: 01/16/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/844,504

Applicant(s)

DOMANICO, MARK WAYNE

Examiner

Thu Khanh T. Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 December 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-26 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 13 recites that weight comprises a container. Is this container the same or different than the container that was previously described in claims 1-12? Clarification and/or correction are required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kott et al (4,750,967).

Kott et al teach an apparatus for forming a liner on a washbasin, comprising a container (60) defining a cavity (86), a seal (72, 56) forming a continuous seal with a bathtub liner (50), an electric heating element (78; col. 11, lines 63-65) which is located inside the top wall of the

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cavity, means for increasing pressure (a negative pressure, 96) to force the bathtub liner outwardly, away from the cavity and cover the bathtub, wherein the container (60) includes a top surface (76) and a plurality of side walls (82, col. 12, lines 8), which associated with the top surface (col. 12, lines 4-10) and defines a lower perimeter of the container, and the seal member (72) extending about the perimeter of the side walls (col. 10, lines 12-16); a portion (82) of the container comprises a transparent member (84) for visual inspection of the cavity (col. 13, lines 14-16).

The apparatus further comprises a kit of a plurality of width and length compensating members (62), in which the length of the kit is adjustable (col. 9, lines 45-54) to accommodate varying lengths of the bathtub, and the weight of the container pressing down on the liner enhancing the effectiveness of the seal member (col. 9, lines 3-5).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kott et al ('967) as applied to claims 1-10 and 12 above, and further in view of Niebling et al (5,217,563).

Kott et al disclose a molding apparatus as described above, but fail to disclose that the pressure means comprises an air compressor in fluid communication with the cavity of the container.

Niebling et al disclose a sheet forming apparatus comprising an air compressor (4), which is in fluid communication with a mold cavity (8) for pushing the sheet against a forming surface (6) during the molding process.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to modify Kott et al by replacing the vacuum by the air compressor as taught by Niebling et al because when using the air compressor the sheet would be pushed against the forming surface without the need of drilling a hole in the bathtub to form an evacuation hole as in the case of using a vacuum.

Allowable Subject Matter

7. Claim 13 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

8. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the prior art fails to teach or suggest an apparatus for forming a bathtub liner comprising a container defining the molding cavity for thermoforming a sheet into the liner, a seal forming a continuous seal with the bathtub liner, a weight on the container to facilitate the sealing of the seal member, in which the weight comprises a fluid container having at least one inlet and outlet to control the amount of fluid inside the fluid container.


9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thu Khanh T. Nguyen whose telephone number is 703-305-7167. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Friday, 6:30-4:00.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wanda L Walker can be reached on 703-308-0457. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

TN
January 9, 2003


ROBERT DAVIS
PRIMARY EXAMINER
GROUP 1300-1722

1/10/03